



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

same, and after giving Eight days public notice shall sell such Goods at public auction to satisfy the Judgment.—

7th Resolved that John Jackson be appointed Sheriff who shall take an oath of office, and have power to call on persons to assist him in the execution of his duty in cases of necessity.

By order of the House

W. CLARK, Chⁿ

At a Convention held at Clarksville on monday the 12th of November 1787, Present Robert George John Jackson Buckner Pittman John Martin, William Thompson, John Reagh, William Thompson jr John Cleghorn and William Clark, being a majority of the Inhabitants of the Town aforesaid.—

1st Resolved, that whereas the Sixth Resolution of a Convention held in this Town the 27th of January 1785, directing the Goods of a Debtor to be sold at a Short period after Judgment obtained against them, is found to be oppressive, the same is hereby repealed and made void.

3. Documents Relating to the Shays Rebellion, 1787.

One of the most important events during the Shays Rebellion was the defense of the Continental arsenal at Springfield against the attack of the insurgents on January 25, 1787. The capture of the magazine with its stores of arms would have raised immensely both the actual strength of the insurgents and their reputation in the eyes of the community. Again, we see on this occasion state militia as the only defense of national property against a rebellion within a state. Says Jeremy Belknap, writing on February 2, 1787, to Ebenezer Hazard: "Is not their attack on the Arsenal a declaration of war against the United States? and ought not Congress to take them in hand, if this government should fail of their duty?"¹ Recent events in our national history give a new interest to the Shays Rebellion.

The protection of the Springfield arsenal was intrusted to Major-General William Shepard. In the first of the letters printed below he reports to Governor Bowdoin his successful defense of the magazine on January 25.

Shepard was facing a body of insurgents much superior to his own force, and was anxiously awaiting the arrival of General Lincoln with troops from the eastern counties. On January 27 Lincoln reached Springfield, and proceeded at once to drive the insurgents from their positions. The second letter is his account of his operations.

¹Belknap Papers, I. 456.

From many towns in the state there came in a stream of petitions against the use of force in quelling the insurrection. The two printed below, from the towns of 'Colrain' and Granby, are perhaps among the most interesting specimens. The last paper is General Lincoln's reply to the Granby petition. The general certainly outflanks his petitioners in a masterly fashion.

JOSEPH PARKER WARREN.

I. GENERAL SHEPARD TO GOVERNOR BOWDOIN.

(Massachusetts Archives, Vol. 190, pp. 317-318.)

SPRINGFIELD Jan^y 26. 1787.

Sir,

The unhappy time is come in which we have been obliged to shed blood. Shays, who was at the head of about twelve hundred men, marched yesterday afternoon about four o'Clock, towards the public buildings in battle array. He marched his men in an open column by platoons. I sent several times by one of my aids, and two other gentlemen, Captains Buffington and Woodbridge, to him to know what he was after, or what he wanted. His reply was, he wanted barracks, and barracks he would have and stores. The answer returned was he must purchase them dear, if he had them. He still proceeded on his march until he approached within two hundred and fifty yards of the arsenal. He then made a halt. I immediately sent Major Lyman, one of my aids, and Capt Buffington to inform him not to march his troops any nearer the Arsenal on his peril, as I was stationed here by order of your Excellency and the Secretary at War, for the defence of the public property, in case he did I should surely fire on him and his men. A M^r Wheeler, who appeared to be one of Shays' aids, met M^r Lyman, after he had delivered my orders in the most peremptory manner, and made answer, that that was all he wanted. M^r Lyman returned with his answer. Shays immediately put his troops in motion, and marched on rapidly near one hundred yards. I then ordered Major Stephens, who commanded the Artillery, to fire upon them. He accordingly did. The two first shott he endeavoured to overshoot them, in hopes they would have taken warning without firing among them, but it had no effect on them. Major Stevens then directed his shott thro' the center of his column. The fourth or fifth shot put their whole column into the utmost confusion. Shays made an attempt to display the column, but in vain. We had one howitz which was loaded with grape shot, which when fired, gave them great uneasiness. Had I been disposed to destroy them, I might have charged upon their rear and flanks with my Infantry and the two field pieces, and could have killed the greater part of his whole army within twenty five minutes. There was not a single musket fired on either side. I found three men dead on the spot, and one wounded, who is since dead. One of our Artillery men by inattention was badly wounded. Three muskets were taken up with

the dead, which were all deeply loaded. I inclose to your excellency a copy of a paper sent to me last evening. I have received no reinforcement yet, and expect to be attacked this day by their whole force combined.

I am, Sir, with great respect, Your Excellency's most
obedient hble Serv^t.

W SHEPARD

Copy.

His Excell^y JAMES BOWDOIN Esq^t.

II. GENERAL LINCOLN TO GOVERNOR BOWDOIN.

(Massachusetts Archives, Vol. 190, pp. 319-320.)

Head Quarters Springfield January 28.^h 1787

Dear Sir—

We arrived here yesterday about noon with one regiment from Suffolk, one from Essex, one from Middlesex, and one from Worcester, with three companies of artillery, a corps of horse, and a volunteer corps under the command of Colonel Baldwin; the other company of artillery with the other regiment from Middlesex and another from Worcester which were as a cover to our stores arrived about eight o'Clock in the evening. On my arrival I found, that Shays had taken post at a little village six miles north of this, with the whole force under his immediate command, and that Day had taken post in West Springfield, and that he had fixed a guard at the ferry house on the west side of the river, and that he had a guard at the bridge over Agawam river. By this disposition all communication from the north and west in the usual paths was cut off.

From a consideration of this insult on Government, that by an early move we should instantly convince the insurgents of its ability and determination speedily to disperse them; that we wanted the houses occupied by these men to cover our own troops; that General Patterson was on his march to join us, which to obstruct was an object with them; that a successful movement would give spirits to the troops; that it would be so was reduced to as great a certainty, as can be had in operations of this kind; from these considerations, Sir, with many others, I was induced to order the troops under arms at three o'Clock in the afternoon, altho' the most of them had been so from one in the morning.

We moved about half after three, and crossed the river upon the ice, with the four regiments; four pieces of artillery; the light horse, and the troops of this division, under General Sheppard moved up the river on the ice, with an intention to fall in between Shay's who was on the east side of the river, and Day on the west, and to prevent a junction as well as to cut off Days retreat. We supposed that we should hereby encircle him with a force so superior that he would not dare to fire upon us which would effectually prevent bloodshed, as our troops were enjoined in the

most positive manner not to fire without orders. The moment we shewed ourselves upon the river the guard at the ferry house turned out and left the pass open to us. They made a little shew of force for a minute or two near the meeting house, and then retired in the utmost confusion and disorder. Our horse met them at the west end of the village, but the insurgents found means by crossing the fields and taking to the woods to escape them: some were taken who are aggravatedly guilty, but not the most so.

The next news we had of them, was by an express from Northampton, that part of them arrived in the south end of their town about eleven o'clock. Shay's also in a very precipitate manner left his post a[t] Chickabee, and some time in the night passed thro' Southadley, on his way to Amherst.

As soon as our men are refreshed this morning, we shall move northward leaving General Sheppard here as a cover to the magazines; perhaps we may overtake Shays and his party, we shall do it, unless they disperse. If they disperse, I shall cover the troops in some convenient place, and carry on our operations in a very different way.

Since the State of our finances should be kept in view, and every unnecessary expence avoided, I have written to General Brooks, that he need not proceed; and to General Warner that he need not call more men into the field. If the men under Shays should disperse no men raised in this division will be retained in the field, saving a guard to the magazine at this place.

This letter will be honored by Colonel Jackson, whose great attention, abilities, and judgment, enable him to give your excellency a very perfect account of the state of affairs in these Counties, and of our late movements.

I have the honor to be with the most perfect esteem,
your excellency's obedient servant
BENJAMIN LINCOLN.

His excellency
GOVERNOR BOWDOIN.

III. PETITION FROM COLERAINE TO THE GOVERNOR AND COUNCIL.

(Massachusetts Archives, Vol. 190, pp. 321-322.)

The humble petition of the Inhabitants of Colrain now assembled to his Excellency and Council.

May it please your Excellency and your honorable Council

Your petitioners inhabitants of the town of Colrain in the County of Hampshire beg leave to represent to your Excellency and Council our sense of the present alarming situation of public affairs and of the Horrors which we Justly entertain of a general effusion of human blood, which from what has already happened is justly to be dreaded and of which if it further proceeds none knows either the extent or end. Your petitioners pretend not to Justify the practice of flying to arms to

obstruct the itting of courts of Justice or of interfering in matters of civil government in any other way than what is pointed out by the Constitution. But as great numbers for some cause or other have had recourse to arms, many of them persons of reputable Characters in society ; who have been by some means or other led into unfavourable sentiments of Civil Government as at present established, and as their views of personal danger (particularly that of their leaders who have taken their post by voluntary election) disposes them to continue in the same course and as these things are at present upon the point of involving our land in confusion bloodshed and devastation : Your petitioners from a realizing sense of the horrid Consequences of civil war most humbly beseech your Excellency and your honourable Council as the supreme executive of the state that a suspension of military force may immediately take place, and that with your Excellency's concurrence our desires may be presented to the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives at their next Session, that an act of indemnity for all past offences may take place. Whatever discrimination of of Characters might be justly observed among the body now at arms, your petitioners conceive it to be impracticable at present ; and as in battle the sword devoureth one as well as another devastation and ruin will probably fall upon the most innocent and valuable part of a community and the advantages to be gained will be we conceive in no wise answerable to the blood and treasure to be expended in the procuring of them, and we flatter ourselves that the body of the people now in arms upon the prospect of such an act will be willing to return to their allegiance ; Or that if such measures should prove ineffectual with some they will at least strengthen the hands of a constitutional government by detaching from the opposite party the most valuable part of their numbers so as to render any future quelling of insurrections a matter of less difficulty, and future attempts to obstruct the courts of justice will be considered more inexcusable both in the sight of God and the world ; and where any have been misled further opportunity will be given to undeceive as also detect the designs of such as would sacrifice their country's welfare to their own ambition. Deeply impressed with a sense of the duty which we owe to God and to our fellow creatures and with a feeling sense of the Calamities which threaten us, we beg leave to lay this our request before your excellency and Council to be referred to the general Court ; relying on your Wisdom patriotism and steady regard for the public Good as also on the wisdom and Integrity of the honourable legislative body of both houses we intreat that the prayer of this our petition may have a favourable hearing and be granted and Your petitioners as in duty bound shall ever pray.

Colrain Jan^y. 29th 1787
Signed p^r Order
of the Town

SAMUEL EDDY	}	Com ^{tes} of Colrain
GEORGE PATTISON		
ABR'M PENNELL		
OREN SMITH		
JONATHAN M ^c GEE		

IV. PETITION FROM GRANBY TO GENERAL LINCOLN.

(Massachusetts Archives, Vol. 190, p. 344.)

To Major General Lincoln Commander of the Militia, now assembled in arms for the support of the Constitutional Government of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

Sir.

The alarming prospect which now presents itself to us, of our being daily or hourly involved in all the horrors of a civil war, we conceive to be a sufficient apology for applying to the Commander in Chief:—And altho' we have every sentiment of respect for your person, and the fullest and most entire confidence in your abilities as a man—and an experienced military Commander; yet, Sir, permit men, full of the most painful anxiety, on account of the present distressing complexion of the times, to lay before you their fervent desires. The inhabitants of the Town of Granby being sensibly affected with the situation we are now in, and the public in general, did on the 31st of this Inst. assemble and vote (being a very full meeting) that inasmuch as application has (according to good information) been made, and is daily making, from a number of Towns in this Commonwealth to the Commander of the militia in arms in favour of Government, that the said Commander will use every possible way and means in his power, as a man, and as an officer, consistent with the Dignity of Government, and his own honour, to prevent the awful destruction of mankind, and shedding the blood of our own Countrymen; and conquer by his Wisdom and not by his arms; and bring our deluded friends to a due sense of their error; and subject them to their duty without the further effusion of blood, if by any means practicable: Therefore voted, that we heartily concur with every such prayer, and every such application; and do join with those who pray and apply as aforesaid.

Test: C COOK, Moderator

GRANBY, Jan^y 31. 1787

Copy

V. GENERAL LINCOLN TO THE GRANBY PETITIONERS.

(Massachusetts Archives, Vol. 190, p. 346.)

Hadley Feb^y 1, 1787

Gentlemen

I am this moment honoured with the receipt of your application of yesterday's date.

I have felt too sensibly for the distresses of those unhappy men, who have been deluded to rise in arms against their Country, in violation of every principle of duty, not to have most seriously contemplated how they might be reclaimed without bloodshed. hitherto our men have

been restrained from firing: Shays has been notified of his danger, and of the consequences which must ensue should he fire upon the troops of Government; his men have been invited to return to their homes and lay down their arms. I hope they will attend to the advice.

I think those Towns, that sincerely wish to put an end to this rebellion, might render essential services in effecting so desirable an object. They should, by their advice, recall their men now in arms; they should aid in apprehending all abettors of them, and all who are yielding them any comfort and supplies:—

this would reduce them to submission and prevent the horrors so much feared.—

I am,

Gentlemen

Your ob^d. Serv^t

B LINCOLN

Copy

4. *West Florida and its Attempt on Mobile, 1810-1811.*

The following five letters have been kindly supplied by Thomas M. Owen, Esq., of the Post-Office Department, Washington, from his rich collection of manuscript materials for the history of Alabama. They have to do with the history of the short-lived "State of West Florida," which, it will be remembered, arose out of an insurrection in West Feliciana in July, 1810, directed against the Spanish government. Baton Rouge being captured, independence was declared on September 26; but President Madison, by proclamation of October 27, and by instructions to Governor Claiborne, annexed the district to the United States (*American State Papers*, III. 395-398). On December 7 Claiborne took possession for the United States of the district south of 31° as far east as the Pearl River. The district between the Pearl and the Perdido remained in the hands of Governor Folch, of Mobile. Before this transitory republic went out of existence it had set on foot a plan for acquiring this eastward region, by the aid of the American settlers on the Tombigbee River (Washington County, Mississippi Territory) above Mobile. These settlers had been much incensed by the tariff restrictions imposed upon their trade by the Spanish authorities at the mouth of the river. The first letter shows the existence, as early as June, of an organization intended to revolutionize Mobile, ostensibly in the interest of King Joseph; the second exhibits it in a new aspect. The remaining letters show how, before Claiborne's suppression of the infant republic, designs of Kemper, Kennedy and their fellows were frustrated by the coöperation of Judge